

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system providing search functionality to support the exchange and consumption of media, the system comprising:

a first television display in a first home;

a first storage in the first home that stores the media;

the first storage supporting consumption of the media by the first television display, and having an associated first network protocol address;

a second television display in a second home;

a second storage supporting consumption of the media by the second television display in the second home, and having an associated second network protocol address; and

search software that receives a request comprising user defined search criteria and one of the first and second associated network protocol addresses, the first and second associated network protocol addresses representing members of a pre-defined group of users, and responds by identifying media stored on at least one of the first and second storage, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, and data.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the first and second network protocol addresses are one of an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number (ESN).

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the first storage and second storage communicatively couple via a communication network that comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the communication network is the Internet.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein consumption comprises at least one of playing digitized audio, displaying a still image, displaying video, and displaying data.

7. The system of claim 1 wherein the user defined search criteria comprises at least one of a time period, a device type, a specific media, a media type, a specific media channel, and a media channel type.

8. The system of claim 1 further comprising:

at least one media peripheral communicatively coupled to the first storage, the at least one media peripheral having storage; and

the search software responding by identifying media stored on the at least one media peripheral, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein the at least one media peripheral comprises at least one of a digital camera, a digital camcorder, a television, a personal computer, a CD player, a home juke-box, a multi-media gateway device, a multi-media personal digital assistant, a DVD player, a tape player, and a MP3 player.

10. The system of claim 1 further comprising:

at least one server for storing media, the at least one server having been designated by a user for searching; and

the search software responding by identifying media stored on the at least one server, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

11. The system of claim 10 wherein the at least one server comprises at least one of a 3rd party media provider, a media peripheral, a personal computer, a 3rd party storage vendor, and a broadband head end.

12. A system providing search functionality supporting the exchange and consumption of media, the system comprising:

a first storage for storing media, in a first home, and having a first associated protocol address;

a second storage for storing media, in a second home, and having a second associated protocol address;

set top box circuitry, in the first home, communicatively coupled to support searching of storage at the first and second associated protocol addresses; and

search software that receives a request comprising user defined search criteria and one of the first and second associated protocol addresses, the first and second associated protocol addresses representing members of a pre-defined group of users, and responds by identifying the other of the first and second associated protocol addresses and the media available at the first and second associated protocol addresses, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein the media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, and data.

14. The system of claim 12 wherein the first and second protocol addresses are one of an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number (ESN).

15. The system of claim 12 wherein the set top box circuitry and the second storage communicatively couple via a communication network that

comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein the communication network is the Internet.

17. The system of claim 12 wherein consumption comprises at least one of playing digitized audio, displaying a still image, displaying video, and displaying data.

18. The system of claim 12 wherein the user defined search criteria comprises at least one of a time period, a device type, a specific media, a media type, a specific media channel, and a media channel type.

19. The system of claim 12 further comprising:

at least one media peripheral communicatively coupled to the first storage, the at least one media peripheral having storage; and

the search software responding by identifying media stored on the at least one media peripheral, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the at least one media peripheral comprises at least one of a digital camera, a digital camcorder, a television,

a personal computer, a CD player, a home juke-box, a multi-media gateway device, a multi-media personal digital assistant, a DVD player, a tape player, and a MP3 player.

21. The system of claim 12 further comprising:

at least one server for storing media, the at least one server having been designated by a user for searching; and

the search software responding by identifying media stored on the at least one server, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

22. The system of claim 21 wherein the at least one server comprises at least one of a 3rd party media provider, a media peripheral, a personal computer, a 3rd party storage vendor, and a broadband head end.

23. A system providing search functionality supporting the exchange and consumption of media, the system comprising:

a first storage for storing media at a first home of a first user, the first user being one of a pre-defined group of users;

a second storage for storing media at a second home of a second user, the second user being one of the pre-defined group of users;

set top box circuitry, in at least one of the first and second homes, the set top box circuitry communicatively coupled to support the identification of media available to the pre-defined group of users; and

search software that receives user defined search criteria and that responds by identifying media available within the pre-defined group of users, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

24. The system of claim 23 wherein the media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, and data.

25. The system of claim 23 wherein the user defined search criteria comprises at least one of a time period, a device type, a specific media, a media type, a specific media channel, and a media channel type.

26. The system of claim 23 further comprising:

at least one media peripheral communicatively coupled to the first storage, the at least one media peripheral having storage; and

the search software responding by identifying media stored on the at least one media peripheral, the identified media matching the user defined search criteria.

27. The system of claim 26 wherein the at least one media peripheral comprises at least one of a digital camera, a digital camcorder, a television, a personal computer, a CD player, a home juke-box, a multi-media gateway device, a multi-media personal digital assistant, a DVD player, a tape player, and a MP3 player.